

**COMPARATIVE CRANIOMETRY  
OF THE YOUNG EURASIAN BEAVER (*CASTOR FIBER*)  
FROM THE MEDIEVAL NOVGOROD THE GREAT – A CASE STUDY**

Zinoviev, A.V.<sup>1</sup>, Korablev, N.P.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Faculty of Biology, Tver State University, Chaikovskogo Prospect 70, Tver, 170002, Russia. E-mail: zinovev.av@tversu.ru.*

<sup>2</sup>*Faculty of Animal Husbandry Technology, Velikie Luki State Agricultural Academy, Leninsky Prospect 2, Velikie Luki, 182112, Russia. E-mail: cranlab@mail.ru.*

The aim of this study was to investigate the unique find from the medieval Novgorod the Great – an almost complete skull of the young Eurasian beaver (*Castor fiber* L.). The Novgorod beaver has a large skull, which was equal to the skulls of the largest representatives of the modern autochthonous and reintroduced Eurasian populations of beaver of the same age. It even exceeded them in some measurements. Although it is difficult on the basis of the scarce sample to draw far-reaching conclusion, it is nevertheless interesting to suggest, that the basin of the River Volkhov had once been populated by the race of the large beavers, larger than many beavers, recently reintroduced in this region. Some beavers from the upper reaches of Don, Volga and Middle Oka, descending from animals from the autochthonous Voronezh population, approach to the Novgorod beaver. These animals belong to the subspecies *Castor fiber orientoeuropaeus* (Lavrov, 1981). Some measurements of the Novgorod beaver skull match the largest examples of the autochthonous or reintroduced representatives of *C. f. belorussicus* (Lavrov, 1981). Further studies are necessary to accept or discharge of the proposed hypothesis.

**Keywords:** beaver, skull, craniometry, race, subspecies, medieval Novgorod